

REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks are respectfully requested.

The Applicant wishes to thank the Examiner for the indicated allowability of Claims 3, 4, 6, 11, 12, 14, 20, and 22-24.

Accordingly, the Applicant has presently canceled Claims 1, 2, 15, 19, and 25 - 27 without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 3 and 20 have been rewritten in independent form to include the limitations of the base claim and the intervening claims from which they originally depended. Therefore, Claims 3, 4, 6, 11, 12, 14, 20, and 22-24 are all now in condition for allowance.

Further, the Applicants have amended Claims 5, 8 - 10, 13, 16-18, and 21 to depend from one of the aforementioned allowable claims. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that the presently allowable claims include Claims 3 - 14, 16 - 18, and 20 - 24.

In view of the present amendments to the claims and further in view of the stated allowability of Claims 3 - 14, 16 - 18, and 20 - 24, it is respectfully submitted that the outstanding rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) and 35 U.S.C. §103(a) are rendered moot.

These rejections include the rejection of Claims 15-17, 26, and 27 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Okanoue, *et al.* (U.S. Patent 6,282,577; hereafter "Okanoue"); and the rejection of Claims 1, 2, 5, 7 - 10, 13, 18, and 25 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Okanoue in view of Guilford, *et al.* (U.S. Patent Application Publication

2002/0087674; hereafter "Guilford"). It is respectfully submitted that these rejections should be reconsidered and withdrawn.

The remaining references of record have been considered. It is respectfully submitted that they do not compensate for the deficiencies of any of the references utilized in rejecting the pending claims.

All objections and rejections having been addressed, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is now in condition for allowance. Early and forthright issuance of a Notice of Allowability is respectfully requested.

Respectfully Submitted,
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Dated: November 1, 2004



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